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sowing, weeding, pulling, watering and grassing Flax. 2. Dressing Flax. 3. Hemp. 4. Spinning and spinning wheels. 5. Preparing yarn and looms. 6. Bleaching utensils and bleaching.

"Cloth, resembling Linen has been made from the filaments of trees, found in the Island of Madagascar, and in the islands of the South-seas. In Sweden, hop stalks were put into water in Autumn, and taken out in March: the filaments were then dressed like Flax, and made in the common manner, into fine strong cloth. The filaments of nettles have been dressed in the same manner as flax, and made into cloth of a fine texture."

We are precluded by want of room, from making any other than introductory observations on the work of Doctor Stephenson; we shall, however, as we have already said, resume the subject in a future number. Should we happen to differ with the author in any particular points, we shall not scruple to express our dissent, confident that in his candour and regard for utility, he will prefer the further elucidation of the subject, to any coincidence of opinion, not founded in experience and truth. We thus early announce, in this imperfect manner, the work of Doctor S. that as far as we can contribute to the measure, its circulation may be promoted, and that a spirit of inquiry, guided by science, may be generally excited, concerning a manufacture, on which the vital interest of Ireland so much depends. Its growing magnitude may be best appreciated by recollecting, that the annual amount of its value has been encreased, since the year in which Mr. Cromelin wrote his pamphlet, upwards of three millions sterling, and that it nearly equals in value, according to the estimate of Mr. Foster, the amount of all the manufactures of Great Britain exported to all the rest of Europe, Ireland excepted, at a period when the ports of Europe were open to her. The production of the raw material of this manufacture, is combined too with agricultural advantages. It is not confined to the walls of a factory; but diffuses itself through the channels of rural and domestic occupation; employing, in the different sexes and ages, that time, which would other-

wise be spent in idleness and vice, correcting and supplying the deficiencies of a soil, not the most favourable to culture, and giving a new face to a province, about a century back, the precarious field of adventure for Scotch colonists, and French refugees. We cannot close these remarks, without reminding, before it is too late, those who may prevent the introduction of Flax-seed, for another year, of the magnitude of the experiment they are about to try, and the great injury that may result from it. "*Such rash Counsellors,*" in the memorable words of Mr. Foster, one of the most eminent friends of the great staple of Ireland, "*should learn to dread the consequences of changing the course of manufactures, by forced measures, and that millions of people will not remain idle!*" R.

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*The Reviewer Reviewed; or, Observations on a Review of Dr. Richardson's Memoir, on the Irish Flax Grass, as it was published in the Transactions of the Belfast Literary Society. p.p. 24. 8vo. Belfast, Smyth & Lyons, 1808.*

A MANUSCRIPT which has met with nothing but approbation from the friendly circle, no sooner changes its form, and issues from the printer's press to public view, than the author often feels his sanguine hopes disappointed at the cool reception which is given to this darling, which he flattered himself had every perfection; even the most gentle criticism offends, and what is mere justice, is ascribed to prejudice or ill-nature.

Let the author, however, place himself in the situation of a Reviewer; let him consider himself at all times responsible to the public, the director of their opinion for and against the productions of the press, and he will certainly make some allowance, and at least admit that the post which the Reviewer occupies, requires a never-ceasing attention, to hold himself free, even from the bonds of friendship. We conceive that true Reviewers should be, in the strictest sense, citizens of the world; totally uninfluenced by sect or party, quick-sighted as the lynx, to see the beauties and defects of the work before

them, courageous as the lion in giving their opinion, and gentle as the lamb when necessitated to give judgment against the author. Under these considerations and with these objects in view, the public may expect, to receive an impartial view of every work which comes before us. When we err, we hope some allowance will be made; for human nature is liable to err. And when the author finds that our opinion does not agree with his own, we sincerely wish, that like the gentle reproof of a father, anxious for the welfare of his son, it may be the means of rousing him to exert his faculties in order to overcome the obstacles which impeded his course towards fame.

The present publication appears in such a fictitious garb, that we were at first doubtful whether to notice it; the hasty, and irritable state in which we suspect it was written, lays it open to a severity of criticism, which it is our wish never to employ. It would be very repugnant to our feelings to shoot the arrows of malevolence against any man, especially at one whose good intentions we have every reason to respect. Taxing us, however, with wilful misrepresentation, it is necessary that we should be more than usually explicit. If our author had carefully read all that we presented to the public in our former review, he would not, we think, have been so much offended as he appears to be.

At page 4, he says, that the Reviewer complains "that the slow pace of agricultural improvement has often been disturbed by theorists." This every practical agriculturist is ready to acknowledge. "Are we then, because some agricultural discoveries have been found not to answer expectation, at one stroke of the pen to condemn all?" By no means, but we think it is necessary for the farmer to proceed with caution, and not to be led by arguments, however plausible, to enter at once into a new mode of cultivation, or to discard some of his old and valuable plants, for others that appear with high-sounding titles. "The Reviewer compares christmas hay-making, to preserving salmon in ice, but he forgets that extraordinary process has completely succeeded." It is long since we knew that the sa-

vages of North America, the Greenlanders, and inhabitants of the Russian Empire, preserved their fish and flesh through the winter in this manner, and also that the late Mr. Demidow, of Moscow "preserved in an ice cellar, apple and pear trees, that were sent to him from France during winter, and kept them in that place till the Spring of the following year. Though vegetation was thus suspended during nineteen months (i. e. thirteen months longer than would have been the case had the trees not changed their place) yet they, vegetated and produced flowers, together with some fruit."\* But Dr. Richardson, we believe is the first, who, disregarding the vulgar course of making hay while the sun shines, "amidst deluges of rain, heavy snows, and damp fogs," houses his, in order to preserve the vegetable vitality, which others endeavour so much to destroy. Whether the Dr. is right or not, we cannot having only enjoyed the pleasure of hay-making in summer, pretend to assert; we should however imagine from his own experiments already quoted† that the vegetation in his hay lofts, must have this advantage, of encreasing the quantity, an advantage he has forgot to mention. "Let us try what it is the King of Denmark is to laugh at." It is at Dr. Richardson's readily believing that the cattle of Iceland had nothing to eat but the paltry equisetum." We have been told of the scarcity of food which prevailed there at particular times; but when all other vegetables had been totally destroyed, does the Dr. think his favourite would have resisted the inclement season? No doubt but a better system of agriculture might be introduced into Iceland; but serious obstacles retard its progress, and we fear that the severity of the climate will long damp the ardour of experimental farmers. The meadows of Iceland, like the meadows of Ireland, are covered with a variety of grasses; but when a severe season prevails, all vegetation ceases, even the equisetum is destroyed, and the cattle resort to the sea

\* Annals of Botany, Vol. I. 190.

† Memoir, page 14, and reviewer reviewed, page 11.

shore, to preserve a miserable existence, by feeding on marine plants. The present king of Denmark, we have reason to believe, is a man of too much sense to laugh at either the systematic arranger of the productions of nature, or the man who tells him the use of them.

Countless is vegetation's verdant brood,  
As are the stars that stud yon cope of heaven:

To marshal all her tribes, in order'd file,  
Generic, or specific, might demand  
His science, wond'rous Swede! whose ample mind,

Like ancient Tadmor's philosophic king,  
Stretch'd from the hyssop creeping on the wall,

To Lebanon's proudest cedars. MASON.

Dr. Richardson and our author are not the first, who without understanding the Linnæan arrangement, have ventured to deride it. They know little of Linnæus or his works, who think that he did not see the advantages likely to result from an intimate knowledge of the medical and economical uses of plants; to these he constantly endeavoured to turn the attention of his followers, and if our authors will take the trouble of looking at the numerous works of Linnæus, they will certainly be convinced of the impropriety of their sarcasm.

In page 6, it is asked, how the Reviewer became acquainted with the subject so well as to contradict the practice of Dr. Richardson? This appears a curious question! At page 9, the Reviewer is taxed with "not understanding Dr. Richardson's plan," which neither accelerates nor retards the consumption of turf bog, as fuel, in the slightest degree; it merely teaches us by Fiorin culture to turn our peat grounds into excellent meadow, until they shall be wanted as fuel, without injuring them or making them unfit for that purpose." If the present author had read the Review of the Memoir, he would there have seen that this part of the Doctor's plan met with our entire approbation, and we hope it will be adopted in place of the present extremely fashionable mode of improving peat bog. At page 11, it is said that the Reviewer "insinuated that the winter green food, so much vaunted, was obtained from pots of Fiorin Grass, forced in a hot house." This is a most extraordinary mistake.

What was there stated was to prove that the Doctor had not hay, but grass, in a state of vegetation in his hay-loft, and we were fully convinced from the experiments there quoted, that what we conjectured from the relation of the hay making process was perfectly right. After quoting Dr. Hunter, Humbolt, and Wilder w, to prove the propriety of having vital hay, our author asks, "what advantage do we expect to derive from preferring so untoward a season?" and answers it by telling us, that the Fiorin vegetates late in Autumn, and that a crop of Fiorin hay mowed in January, will probably give double the quantity it would have afforded if cut early in September. This season we are told much pains are taken to decide the question." Now this is exactly what we wish had been done before the Dr. had laid before the public his prospectus of advantages to be derived from the culture of Fiorin. We must request our author to read again the last paragraph of our review, and he will find our opinion of Dr. Richardson's Memoir fully delivered, "that had the writer confined his praises within moderate boundaries, he might have been the means of inducing some agriculturists, to turn their attention to the cultivation of a plant, which in a suitable soil and situation, will probably reward their labours." This is still our opinion. Dr. Richardson has given too much praise to his favourite grass, while we are surprised that an English agriculturist should be so little acquainted with its good qualities, and that propensity of all cattle, to neglect grass which has arrived at a certain period of growth; the same grass which they would have eaten greedily in an earlier stage of growth, is neglected when it has lost its succulence, and apparently uninviting herbage is preferred; but, as was the case with Mr. Smith's field, should young shoots appear after a covering of manure, they would be greedily devoured. The plan of cultivating a single species of plant in meadows, or grazing fields, we have many reasons to think will never turn to advantage. All animals delight in variety, and we have often seen cattle amidst the finest grasses, regale themselves with the harsh reed grass

(*Arundinaceae*), and the rigid Horsetail (*Equisetum limosum*).

We strongly suspect that Dr. Richardson, has been making his experiment all this time on two different species of grass, one the true *Agrostis stolonifera*, at Portrush, a maritime grass, and predominant in salt marshes, while the county Armagh grass, is the *Agrostis vulgaris*, a plant universally spread over the whole country, in every soil and situation, but only valuable where it gets good nourishment.

The publication now before us may be of use to the readers of the Memoir, as tending to explain more fully the Doctor's Ideas; indeed the author who has declined to put his name to the work seems so well acquainted with every particular, that we have some

doubts whether it is not the Dr. himself. Be this as it may, we wish he had been more explicit relative to what it mentioned at page VIII. Does he wish us to believe that, the Memoir presented by the Literary Society is not the third edition? We can however only account for its publication, (as well as that of Mr. Gay Lussac's Journal, which had appeared so long before,)\* by the extreme Modesty of the Members in appearing before the public. It is therefore not without pleasure we find that they have at last got over their diffidence, and given a Memoir at once original and instructive, to which we now gladly turn our attention.

\*Tillock's Philosophical Magazine, Vol. 21, p. 220.

## ANCIENT LITERATURE.

### ON THE ROMAN HEROIC POETS.

(Translated from the French of La Harpe.)

THE works of Virgil are intelligible to a greater number of readers than those of Homer, because the knowledge of Latin is much more common than that of Greek. Virgil, in the original tongue, is early put into the hands of every student. Hence, the learned world have long decided on his merits and faults. Of the Eclogues and Georgics, this is not the place to speak; I shall here confine myself to some observations on the *Æneid*. The imperfection of this poem, and the perfection of the Georgics, are a proof of the immense difference which exists between the best didactic poem, and this great creation of the Epic. On turning from the study of Homer to that of Virgil, what strikes us most is, the veneration bestowed on the Greek by the Latin poet. Though we had never been told that Virgil was an adorer of Homer, to such a degree as to be named the Homeric (*Homericus*), the perusal of this work would suffice to convince us of it. He follows him step by step; but we know that thus to transfer the beauties of a foreign language, has always been considered as one of the triumphs of

genius; to judge of its difficulty we need only recal to mind the saying of Virgil that it would be easier to deprive Hercules of his club, than to take a line from Homer. He himself has, nevertheless, taken a considerable number; and in his translation, though he does not always equal, he sometimes surpasses his original\*.

The first fault to be remarked in the *Æneid*, is, the character of the hero;

\*No blame should be imputed to Virgil for translating Homer as he has done; Latin critics have condemned him with greater justice, for having borrowed from his own countrymen: that he has been guilty of plagiarism with respect to them, cannot be doubted, when we see the many quotations of lines borrowed by him, not only from Pacuvius, Ennius, Accius, and Sævius; but even from his most illustrious co-temporaries, such as Lucretius, Catullus, Varius and Furius. None of the works of the two last of these have come down to us. The former of them, however, is known to us by the eulogium bestowed on him by Horace, who speaks of him as having a talent peculiarly adapted, to heroic poetry.

—*Fortis epos acer*  
*Ut nemo Varius ducit.*

None has exhibited bolder genius in heroic verse, than Varius.